

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGUI 00062 01 OF 02 111455Z POSS DUPE
ACTION HA-05

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 0062

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, CT, US
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER: US-CAE RELATIONS AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: 77 STATE 282352

SUMMARY: I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER GBEZERA BRIA
JANUARY 9 FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON WHICH INCLUDED A DISCUSSION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND BILATERAL US-CAE RELATIONS. THZ MINISTER
ASSURED ME ONCE AGAIN OF THE GOCAE'S ATTACHMENT TO HUMAN
RIGHTS AND TO THE WEST. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN, HOWEVER, THAT
THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS UNDER
SECTION 116 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT WOULD RAKE UP THE
DIFFICULTIES OF 1977. HE ASKED US TO REGARD THE CAE NOT IN
LIGHT OF OUR INSTITUTIONS TODAY BUT OF OUR OWN EACLY HISTORY.
HE HOPED THAT 1978 WOULD BE A YEAR OF RENEWED FRIENDSHIP,
WHICH LOOKED TO FUTURE COOPERATION AND NOT PAST DIFFERENCES.
END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGUI 00062 01 OF 02 111455Z POSS DUPE

1. ON JANUARY 9 I HAD AN EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF US-CAE RELATIONS
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GBEZERA BRIA. WE NOT ONLY
REVIEWED THE BROAD ISSUES IN OUR RELATIONSHIP BUT ALSO
A RANGE OF MINOR PROBLEMS. THE TONE OF THE MEETING WAS
BOTH FRANK AND CORDIAL.

2. I OPENED MY PRESENTATION BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

FOR THE OPPORTUNITY THE GOCAE HAD GIVEN ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL RADIO AND TV DISCUSSION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECEMBER 15 HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT (77 BANGUI 2796). THE BROADCAST WAS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN VIEW OF THE EARLIER ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION CRITICIZING THE UNITED STATES, WHICH ALONG WITH THE BROADCAST OF THE NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS SPEECH (77 BANGUI 2630) HAD GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT US-CAE RELATIONS WERE NOT GOOD. MY APPEARANCE ON RADIO AND TV TO PUT FORWARD THE USG'S POINT OF VIEW ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAD RECTIFIED THE SITUATION AND CREATED THE BASIS FOR A MORE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP IN 1978. I ALSO NOTED THE RECENT EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE EMPEROR, OBSERVING THAT BOTH HAD INDICATED THAT THEY WISHED TO PUT THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF THE PAST BEHIND US. THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR WAS THE TIME TO RE-LAUNCH OUR RELATIONS ON THE NEW BASIS. I LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE GOCAE TOWARDS THIS GOAL.

3. I WENT ON TO INFORM THE MINISTER OF A POTENTIAL UPCOMING PROBLEM: THE REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL AID-RECEIVING COUNTRIES REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116 OF THE 1977 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT (REFTEL). I GAVE HIM THE FRENCH TRANSLATION OF SECTION 116. I NOTED THAT THE REPORT WOULD OF NECESSITY MENTION THE PROBLEMS OF 1977 (I.E. THE JOURNALISTS' INCIDENT), EVSN THOUGH THIS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGUI 00062 01 OF 02 111455Z POSS DUPE

WAS SOMETHING WHICH WE WISHED TO PUT BEHIND US. THE REPORT WOULD ALSO, I BELIEVED, NOTE THE CAE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES AND INSTITUTIONS. OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE THERE WERE SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS WOULD BE COVERED IN THE REPORT AND I THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT THE PRESS WOULD SINGLE OUT THE COMMENTS ON THE CAE. I COMMENTED PARENTHETICALLY THAT THE 1977 REPORT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL STATED THAT AFTER THE DECEMBER 1976 AMNESTY EMPEROR BOKASSA HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL OFFERING INSPECTION OF THE LOCAL PRISON BY THE UN RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE. ALTHOUGH THE INSPECTION HAD NEVER TAKEN PLACE, I SUGGESTED ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ARRANGE AN INSPECTION IF THERE WERE TO BE ANOTHER AMNESTY LATER THIS YEAR.

4. THE BALANCE OF MY PRESENTATION COVERED OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS EXIM RESCHEDULING, THE CONSULAR CONVENTION, AND THE WEINSTEIN VISIT (SEPTELS). I ALSO TOOK UP A SERIES OF MINOR PROBLEMS INCLUDING LONG OVERDUE VISAS FOR THE EMBASSY STAFF, THE RETURN OF PCV MAHER'S MOTORCYCLE, AND A CONFISCATED EMBASSY RADIO. IN RAISING THE LATTER ISSUES, I EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING BILATERAL PROBLEMS AS WE WORKED TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS. THE

FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK A POSITIVE POSITION ON ALL THESE
QUESTIONS AND ASSURED ME HE WOULD WORK TO RESOLVE THEM
PROMPTLY.

5. IN COMMENTING ON MY OVERALL PRESENTATION THE FOREIGN
MINISTER OBSERVED THAT I WAS THE FIRST AMBASSADOR HE HAD
RECEIVED IN THE NEW YEAR. THE GOCAE WISHED TO HAVE GOOD
RELATIONS WITH THE US. INDEED, THE CAE COULD NOT DO
OTHERWISE THAN SEEK GOOD RELATIONS. HOWEVER, THE INTENDED
RELEASE TO THE PUBLIC OF THE REPORT UNDER SECTION 116 OF
THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT CLEARLY WORRIED THE FOREIGN
MINISTER. HE RETURNED TO THIS ISSUE FIVE TIMES. HHE WAS
CONCERNED THAT EFFORTS TO MAKE 1978 A YEAR OF COOPERATION
AND UNDERSTANDING WITH THE UNITED STATES MIGHT BE UNDONE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGUI 00062 01 OF 02 111455Z POSS DUPE

BY PUBLICATION OF A DOCUMENT REFERRING TO EVENTS WHICH THE
CAE HAD WANTED TO PUT BEHIND IT AND WHICH IT HAD ASSUMED
THE USG WOULD ALSO NOT WANT TO STRESS. HE NOTED THE
EMPEROR'S DECLARATION OF ATTACHMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN HIS
DECEMBER 31 ADDRESS TO THE NATION AND THE PROGRESS IN
ESTABLISHING THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT FORSEEN IN THE
CONSTITUTION (INCLUDING, HE HINTED, ELECTIONS PLANNED FOR
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY). GBEZERA BRIA DID NOT ENTIRELY

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00062 02 OF 02 111516Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 0062

ACCEPT MY EXPLANATION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS UNDER A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH THE REPORT AND HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO MENTION THE INCIDENTS OF 1977.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER PUT THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE "REALITY" OF THE CAE'S TIES TO THE WEST, WHICH MEANT NOT ONLY WESTERN EUROPE BUT ALSO THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED ALSO THE "POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT" OF THE US RETURN TO AFRICA FOLLOWING THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER. HE HOPED THAT THE USG WOULD UNDERSTAND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE CAE WAS PURSUING ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT--CONDITIONS WHICH WERE MORE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN AMERICA IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES THAN THOSE OF TODAY, WHEN WE HAD REACHED A PLATEAU OF CONTINUING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

7. FINALLY, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED FOR MY VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE USG ROLE THERE, AS WELL AS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. SPEAKING PERSONALLY HE SAID THAT THE CAE, AS WELL AS ALL OTHER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGUI 00062 02 OF 02 111516Z

AFRICAN MODERATES, WERE FULLY BEHIND EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT IN HIS COURAGEOUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN THE AREA.

8. IN CONCLUSION I TOLD GBEZERA BRIA THAT I HAD INFORMED WASHINGTON OF THE VARIOUS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAE CONSTITUTION AND OF THE EMPEROR'S REPEATED INDICATIONS OF THE CAE'S ATTACHMENT TO THE WEST. I ASSURED HIM WE SOUGHT A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP. WE WERE ONLY NOW GETTING STARTED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF AID PROJECTS SIGNED OVER THE PAST YEARS. 1978 WOULD BE THE YEAR OF TAKE OFF FOR THESE ONGOING PROJECTS. IT WAS FOR THAT REASON THAT I HAD WANTED TO ALERT THE CAE TO THE FORTH-COMING PUBLICATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT. ALTHOUGH THE REPORT COULD CREATE PROBLEMS, THAT WAS NOT ITS PURPOSE AND I HOPED THE GOCAE WOULD NOT OVERREACT TO IT. OUR HOPE WAS THAT WE COULD WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITHOUT BEING PREOCCUPIED BY THE PAST.
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